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commencement of the rains, in April and May, when the rivers begin to rise again and bring the fish into the shallows where they are easily speared among the reeds and weeds. There is very little fishing—by spear in occasional lagoons—after the Nuer have returned to their villages, for these are mainly inland, away from open water, and the streams are too deep and too infested with crocodiles to encourage fishing. Also, the fish are widely distributed by flood water and protected by rank marsh vegetation. Those Nuer whose villages are on the banks of large rivers sometimes fish from dug-out canoes (Plate IX) with long harpoons, but the Nuer possess very few good canoes —and these they have exchanged or stolen from the Anuak—for they have neither the wood nor the skill to make more than crudely burnt-out vessels of palm and sycamore.

Nuer are fine spearsmen but, otherwise, not very ingenious fishermen. Except for occasional fish spitted with amazing rapidity from the bows of canoes by harpoons and spears as they jump or rise to the surface, Nuer never see their prey, but either hurl their spears at random into likely spots amid weeds and reeds or set up grasses and withies to indicate the presence of fish. A myth recounts that once upon a time all fish were visible to the human eye but that God later made them invisible in the water. The chief Nuer weapon is the barbed spear, though the harpoon is considerably used. When fishing in shallows with spears they sometimes strike the water with a ball of twine or the shell of a giant snail attached to a stick (Fig. 10) to attract the fish. Fish are eaten roasted or boiled.

VI

Nuerland is also very rich in game, though Nuer do not exploit this source of food extensively. There are vast herds of tiang and cob; other antelopes are plentiful; and buffalo, elephant, and hippopotami abound. Nuer eat all animals except carnivora, monkeys, some of the smaller rodents, and zebra, and they kill the last for its skin and tail in the south of Lou country, where it roams in the dry season. Lions abound, especially to the west of the Nile, and are a serious menace to the herds, but Nuer only kill them and leopards, the skins of which are worn by chiefs, if they attack cattle in kraals or grazing grounds, as

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tural relations are strongest between adjacent tribes, but a common social structure embraces the whole of Nuerland; and (3) the social sphere of an individual, being his circuit of social contacts of one kind or another with other Nuer.

VIII

The political structure of the Nuer can only be understood in relation to their neighbours, with whom they form a single political system. Contiguous Dinka and Nuer tribes are segments within a common structure as much as are segments of the same Nuer tribe. Their social relationship is one of hostility and its expression is in warfare.

The Dinka people are the immemorial enemies of the Nuer. They are alike in their oecologies, cultures, and social systems, so that individuals belonging to the one people are easily assimilated to the other; and when the balanced opposition between a Nuer political segment and a Dinka political segment changes into a relationship in which the Nuer segment becomes entirely dominant, fusion and not a class structure results.

As far as history and tradition go back, and in the vistas of myth beyond their farthest reach, there has been enmity between the two peoples. Almost always the Nuer have been the aggressors, and raiding of the Dinka is conceived by them to be a normal state of affairs and a duty, for they have a myth, like that of Esau and Jacob, which explains it and justifies it. Nuer and Dinka are represented in this myth as two sons of God who promised his old cow to Dinka and its young calf to Nuer. Dinka came by night to God's byre and, imitating the voice of Nuer, obtained the calf. When God found that he had been tricked he was angry and charged Nuer to avenge the injury by raiding Dinka's cattle to the end of time. This story, familiar to every Nuer, is not only a reflection of the political relations between the two peoples but is also a commentary on their characters. Nuer raid for cattle and seize them openly and by force of arms. Dinka steal them or take them by treachery. All Nuer regard them—and rightly so—as thieves, and even the Dinka seem to admit the reproach, if we attribute correct significance to the statement made to Mr. K. C. P. Struvé in 1907 by the Dinka keeper of the shrine of Deng dit at Luang Deng.

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613 621 innumerable cognatic ties, so that however many lineages there may be in a local community their members are all related to one another by some kind of cognation and affinity. A lineage remains an exclusive agnatic group only in ritual situations. In other situations it is merged in the community, and cognation (*mar*) takes the place of lineage agnation (*buth*) as the value through which people living together express their relations to one another. The agnatic structure of the dominant lineage is not stressed in ordinary social relations, but only on a political plane where relations between territorial segments are concerned, for the assimilation of territorial segments to segments of the dominant lineage means that the interrelations of the one are expressed in terms of the other.

In every small tribal segment there is a lineage of the dominant clan of the tribe associated with it, and the members of the segment are joined to this lineage by adoption, cognatic kinship, or kinship fictions, in such a way that one may speak of them as an accretion around a lineage nucleus. As these different nuclei are lineages of the same clan, or, as we shall see in the next section, assimilated to it, the structure of the dominant clan is to the political system like the anatomical structure to the system of an organism.

X

000 We have seen how Dinka and strangers are linked to the framework of the dominant clan by adoption and cognation and how these links form an embracing kinship system which provides the non-political texture of the political system. Kinship values are the strongest sentiments and norms in Nuer society and all social interrelations tend to be expressed in a kinship idiom. Adoption and the assimilation of cognatic to agnatic ties are two ways in which community relations are translated into kinship relations: in which living together forces residential relations into a kinship pattern. A third way is by mythological creation of kinship fictions, and this way is appropriate to relations between dominant lineages and stranger and Dinka groups, living with them in the same tribal segments, which are too large and occupy too distinct a territory for incorporation by either of the other two methods. It is the way

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608 609 563 773 in which large pockets of strangers and Dinka are incorporated into the conceptual scheme of a tribe.

It has frequently been emphasized that political relations are often expressed in speech as lineage relations, in the sense that one talks of a local community as though it were a lineage, thereby assimilating to a dominant lineage those who share the same community life with it; and that lineage relations are often expressed as political relations, in the sense that one talks of a lineage as though it were identical with the local community in which it is only a nucleus, thereby depriving the lineage of its unique agnatic status and giving it a general residential value. In conformity with this way of describing community interrelations, they are personified in myths and derived from personal relationships of a kinship kind.

613 773 173 We do not propose to give a collection of Nuer myths. We have so far only mentioned one myth explaining group interrelations: that which tells why the Nuer raid the Dinka. There are very few myths of this general kind. Most relate to clans and lineages in their corporate territorialized form and explain their association with one another as tribes and tribal segments, particularly the relations between dominant lineages and large stranger lineages living with them. We are not always able to explain mythological relations by the present-day political system, but this can often be done, and where we fail to do it we attribute our inability to ignorance, especially to ignorance of tribal history.

The two large Lou tribal sections, the Jimac and the Jaajoah which appear on the map on p. 56, but not on the clan tree of the JINACA, the dominant clan of the tribe, on p. 196, are divisions called after the JIMAC and JAAJOAH lineages. They are said to be *gaat nyiet*, children of daughters of the founder of the JINACA clan, and there is a myth accounting for this maternal link. Denac was said to have had, according to the Lou story, four sons, named Yin, Dak, Bal, and Bany, by one wife, and Nyang and two nameless brothers by a second wife. These wives are sometimes said to have been called Nyagun and Nyamor and the two primary sections of the tribe, Gun and Mor, to be named after them. Nyang's two brothers were eaten by an ogre. When, afterwards, the sons of Denac went fishing, the four sons of one mother went by themselves and Nyang by himself, for he would not accompany his half-

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brothers, but pined for the sons of his mother. When he caught a fish someone would come and steal it from him, for he was all by himself and only a boy. When he came home he would not sit with the other boys facing his father, but sat apart with his back to him, and when his father asked him why he was troubled he replied that he was thinking of his brothers whom the ogre had eaten. His father said to him, 'Never mind, take your two sisters and let them be your brothers.' So when Nyang went fishing he was accompanied by his sisters Nyabil and Fadwai. Nyang is the founder of the GAALIEK lineage, Nyabil of the JIMAC lineage, and Fadwai of the JAAJOAH lineage. These lineages together form the kinship framework of the Mor primary section of the Lou tribe and the myth explains their association. This maternal link has not prevented intermarriage between the GAALIEK and the JIMAC. Apart from questions of ritual and exogamy the descendants of Nyabil and Fadwai are treated as though these daughters had been sons, and they possess a mythological patent which gives them equal status in the tribe with the *diel*. In tracing their agnatic ascent members of these lineages do not go further back than their ancestress. From her they continue to her father, Denac.

In the Gaawar tribe there is an important JAKAR lineage which is mythologically attached to the GAAWAR, the aristocrats of the tribe, in the following manner. A man called Kar, or Jakar, descended from heaven by a rope that connected the sky with a tamarind tree, probably the tree in Lang country beneath which mankind is said to have been created. He was later followed by War, the founder of the GAAWAR clan, who was found sitting in the tree by Kar's sister who was gathering firewood accompanied by her dog. She returned to tell her brother that she had found a man whose head was covered in blood. Kar tried to persuade him to come to the village but he refused to do so. They then sacrificed an ox and roasted its flesh and the smell so attracted War, who was very greedy, that he climbed down the tree and entered the village. When he had eaten he wanted to return to heaven, but Kar cut the rope. Mr. B. A. Lewis has kindly furnished me with what he says is a less common version, found in the Gaawar tribe. War fell from heaven in a rainstorm and was discovered by a dog which belonged to Logh, but was with Kwec's wife when she was looking for wood in the forest and War was found. Kwec's wife took him home with her and a dispute arose between Kwec and Logh about the ownership of the foundling. Logh claimed War on the ground that it was his dog which had discovered him, and Kwec claimed him because his wife had found him. Then Kar joined in the discussion, saying that War was his brother.

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This myth brings War and Kar and Logh into some kind of relationship to one another and is to be explained by the fact that the two main clans in the Gaawar tribe, next to the aristocratic clan of the GAAWAR, are the JAKAR and the JALOGH. The JALOGH are presumably the same clan as live to the south of Dok country where a small territory is named after them. Kwec was, doubtless, the founder of the KWEC lineage after whom a small territory, next to the Jalogh country, is named. We may surmise that, since both lineages are found in Gaawar country at the present day and in its present site to the east of the Nile, they also had close relations with the GAAWAR when all three clans lived in their homeland to the west of the Nile.

The richest clan mythology is that of the GAATGANKIIR, and it clearly illustrates the mythological integration of lineages of different origins to the dominant lineage system in a political structure, and shows how territorial relations are given a kinship value.

There are several versions of many of the incidents relating to Kir, the founder of the GAATGANKIIR clan, and we give an abridgement of one of these. A Dinka of the Ngok tribe, called Yul, saw a stalk of a gourd on a river bank and, having followed it a long way, arrived at a huge gourd. He cut this gourd open and out of it came Kir with various ritual objects. Yul's wife suckled the child as well as her own baby, Gying. When Kir grew up he turned out to be a witch and magician and the sons of Yul tried to kill him because his evil powers were destroying the cattle. Only Gying remained Kir's friend, and said to him, as he fled from Yul's home, that he would one day follow after him and join him.

In his flight Kir came to the Nile where he saw a man, called Tik, in the river and asked him for help. Tik struck the waters of the Nile and cut them in two and Kir crossed over to the west bank. Kir told Tik that when he had found a place to settle in Tik was to come after him. Tik accompanied Kir till they met a man of the Wot tribe who took them to his home where the JIDIET, the dominant clan of the Wot, sacrificed a black ox so that the lethal power of witchcraft might leave Kir's eyes and enable him to look at people and cattle without killing them. Kir then dug a hole for himself in a termite-mound near a cattle camp of the GAAWAR, where he performed many strange feats. Eventually the GAAWAR offered sacrifices and persuaded him to leave the mound and took him to their camp.

Kir was then given a wife, Nyakwini, who bore him Thiang before he killed her with his witchcraft. He then married Nyabor who bore him Kun. He likewise killed her. The people then gave him

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a lame woman, Duany, who bore him Jok. In Lou and Eastern Jikany versions the three wives were all daughters of Gee, the founder of the GAATGANGEEKA family of clans, and in versions to the west of the Nile the first two were GAAWAR and Duany a NYAPIR of the Bul tribe, but all accounts make Nyakwini and Nyabor more closely related to one another than either to Duany. After Duany had borne Jok she killed Kir with witchcraft, for she, also, was a witch. Later Thiang, her dead husband's eldest son, cohabited with her and begat Nyang.

In all the variants of the Kir myth the parts played by Gying and Tik are stressed. Gying was suckled with him and afterwards joined him and lived with him as a brother. When Kir died his eldest sons Thiang and Kun possessed cattle, but the youngest son, Jok, and Gying had no cattle. Thiang wanted to prevent Gying from acquiring cattle, but Kun gave him some, so Thiang said that Kun and Gying were to live together. Tik had saved Kir's life and had gone to live with him. There is a further story of how Gying and Tik were threatened by an ogre and shared a hut together and became like brothers, so that the lineages descended from these two men do not intermarry.

Without recording further details we may note how actual political relations are mythologically represented in the characters of these stories. The two largest segments of the Gaajak tribe which are named after nuclei of strangers are the Kong section, the stranger nucleus of which is a lineage descended from Tik, and the Dhille section, the stranger nucleus of which is a lineage descended from Gying, and these two sections live together as parts of the Reng primary section (see diagram on p. 140, and sketch-map on p. 58). The myth tells also how Jok and Nyang are sons of the same mother, Duany, Jok being begotten by Kir and Nyang by Thiang. This is a mythological representation of the structure of the Gaagwang tribe which has dominant lineage nuclei descended from both Nyang and Jok, and also of the political relations between the Gaagwang tribe and the Gaajok tribe, for these relations, especially to the west of the Nile, are of close alliance compared to the more distant relations between the Gaagwang tribe and the primary sections of the Gaajak tribe that also border them, the Thiang and the Reng. Thiang and Kun were begotten by Kir and borne by women who are generally represented as sisters, and the sections in which their descendants are dominant are the Thiang and Gaagwong primary sections of the Gaajak tribe, the third primary section of which, the Reng, has nuclei descended from Thiang, Gying, and Tik, whose relationships in the myth have already been noted.

[p. 233 contains no textual material]

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In every Nuer tribe there are similar stories which explain the relations between the aristocratic clan and large stranger lineages living with it. Other myths explain the relations between these stranger lineages. Thus the lineages living at Nyueny and in neighbouring villages in Leek country, JUAK, NGWOL, JIKUL, &c., are all mythologically related to one another and to the dominant clan of the Leek tribe. These myths also explain the ritual symbols and observances of the lineages mentioned in them.

Actual interrelations of a political kind are thus explained and justified in mythological interrelations, and wherever, as far as we know, large lineages of different clans are politically associated there is a myth bringing their ancestors into some social relationship. This is especially the case between dominant lineages and stranger or Dinka lineages, and the mythological link gives them equality and fraternity in community life, while permitting ritual exclusiveness and intermarriage between them. Complete assimilation is impossible, for there must always be ritual distinction or the clan and lineage systems would collapse. Strangers have to be incorporated into the community of the dominant lineage and excluded from its agnatic structure.

XI

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By adoption, the recognition of the equivalence of cognatic and agnatic ties in community life, and by mythological relationships, all persons in a tribal segment have kinship relationships of some kind to one another and the segments themselves are given a kinship relationship to each other within the political system. Although the categories of *diel*, *rul*, and *jaang* create social differentiation, it is on a ritual and domestic, rather than on a political, plane and is only indicated in certain situations of social life.

This is evident in the Nuer use of the three words denoting the three statuses. It is a common Nuer practice when addressing people and speaking publicly about them to use words which denote a closer relationship between them and the speaker than their actual relationship. This is commonly done with kinship terms and, also, in defining the status of a person in his tribe. Nuer do not emphasize that a man is a stranger or Dinka by

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tribal chiefs and councils, or any other form of tribal government, we have to seek elsewhere for the organizing principle within the structure which gives it conceptual consistency and a certain measure of actual cohesion, and we find it in aristocratic status. In the absence of political institutions providing central administration in a tribe and co-ordinating its segments, it is the system of lineages of its dominant clan which gives it structural distinctness and unity by the association of lineage values, within a common agnatic structure, with the segments of a territorial system. In the absence of a chief or king, who might symbolize a tribe, its unity is expressed in the idiom of lineage and clan affiliation.

XII

In the Kir myth not only are the ancestors of important lineages, and, through them, the lineages and the territorial segments in which they are incorporated brought into relationship, but the ancestors of clans, and, through them, the clans and the tribes in which these clans are dominant, are linked together. Thus Kir, in various versions of the myth, is adopted by Gee, the founder of the GAATGANGEEKA family of clans; meets Wot, in whom the Wot tribe is personified; has relations with the GAAWAR; and so forth. The myth, thus, also mirrors intertribal relations and brings the whole of Nuerland into a single kinship structure, which we call the clan system as distinct from the lineage system of a clan.

The clan is the farthest range to which agnatic kinship is traced when the marriage of two persons is in question, but some clans have, nevertheless, an agnatic relationship to other clans, though Nuer do not regard it quite in the same way as relationship between lineages of a clan. They give the impression, when speaking of the ancestor of a clan, that they regard him as an historical figure, clearly delineated against a background of tradition, while, when speaking of the ancestor of a family of clans, they seem to regard him as a vaguer figure obscured in the dimness of myth.

We here note again that the dominant lineages in more than one tribe sometimes form part of the same clan structure. Thus, the lineages dominant in the Gaajok, Gaajak, and Gaagwang

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614 tribes, to the east and to the west of the Nile, are all segments
613 of the GAATGANKIIR clan. Also the dominant lineages of the
619 Rengyan tribe, to the west of the Nile, and the Lou tribe, to the east of the Zeraf, are part of the JINACA clan. This distribution is easily accounted for, because we know that till recently

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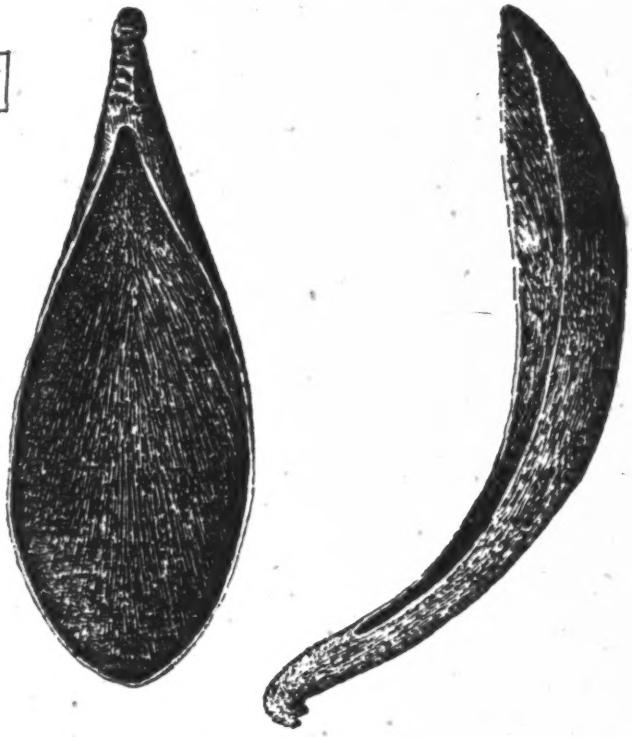

FIG. 14. Buffalo-horn spoons.

the Eastern GAATGANKIIR and the Eastern JINACA lineages lived with the other lineages of these clans in the Jikany and Rengyan areas to the west of the Nile.

There are also more general and mythological relationships between clans. In recounting these relationships Nuer personify
● 773 the tribes and give them a kinship value by assimilating them to their dominant clans. Thus, they speak of Bor, Lang, Lou, Thiang, Lak, &c., as though they were persons and could have kinship relations between them like those between persons, and as though all the members of these tribes were of the same

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614 descent. By so doing they stress community relations and obscure clan differentiation in a political context. This habit 773 often makes their statements appear confused, and even contradictory, but it accords with a strong tendency in social life, as we have seen in discussing the various meanings of the word *'cieng'*, to identify the lineage system and the political system in a specific set of relations.

173 Many Nuer regard their ancestors Gee and Ghaak as the progenitors of all true Nuer, though one is given different 773 classifications in different parts of Nuerland. Among the Lou 619 it is said that all the tribes are descended from Gee, except the Jikany and Gaawar tribes. These two alone are differentiated because their proximity makes them significant for the Lou, whereas all the other tribes, which have no direct relations with the Lou, are vaguely classified as children of Gee. Among the Eastern Jikany all true Nuer tend to be classed as 'Gee' in contrast to 'Kir', the Jikany themselves. In the valley of the Zeraf and in Western Nuerland, where the tribes have a very much wider range of intertribal contacts, there is a wider range of differentiation. The Nuer tribes there fall into three classes: the Gee group, consisting of Bor, Lang, Rengyan, Bul, Wot, Ror, Thiang, and Lou, stretches in an unbroken line, from north-west to south-east, across the centre of Nuerland; the Ghaak group, consisting of Nuong, Dok, Jaloogh, Beegh, Gaankwac, and Rol, occupies the south-western part of Nuerland; and the Ril group, consisting of the Leek and Lak, occupies the lower reaches of the Zeraf and the Ghazal near their junction with the Nile. I have sometimes heard the Bul included in the Ril group. However, in Dok country and in adjacent tribal areas people further distinguish between the tribes elsewhere classed as sons of Ghaak and divide them into a Ghaak group, comprising Beegh, and Jaalogh, and a Gwea group, comprising Dok, Nuong, Gaankwac, and Rol.

614 In these classifications we note a further exemplification of what we have often observed elsewhere about Nuer classifica- 619 tions: their segmentary tendency and their relativity. Whilst, for example, other Nuer see the Dok and the Beegh as Ghaak they only see themselves as an undivided Ghaak group in opposition to the Gee fraternity and otherwise see themselves

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as parts of opposed segments, Gwea and Ghaak. It will be noted that these groups of tribes, often represented as families of clans, occupy distinct sections of Nuerland. Before the period of eastwards migration they ran from north to south, in three or four groups, to the west of the Nile. Territorial contiguity and a common clan structure, such as we find among the Jikany tribes, or close relationship within a clan system, such as we find among the Ghaak group of tribes, go together, and the values of the two systems may be assumed to interact. The segmentation of lineages within a tribe in relation to its political segmentation is thus repeated in the whole clan system of the Nuer, the segments of which are co-ordinated with the political segmentation of Nuerland. Those tribes which are adjacent to one another have a common opposition to other groups of tribes and this relation is reflected in the tendency for them to be represented, through their dominant lineages and clans, as closely related on a mythological and ritual plane.

Gee and Ghaak and Gwea are represented as brothers, sons of a mythological ancestor, sometimes called Ghau, the World, and sometimes Ran, Man, whose father is said to be Kwoth, God. Ril is often described as one of their brothers as well, though he is sometimes represented to be a son of a daughter of Gee, called Kar.

All sons of Gee have agnatic kinship (*buth*) which allows them to partake of one another's sacrifices. In these ritual situations only the true sons of Gee, the JINACA, the GAATHIANG, and JIDIET, and other clans descended from Gee, have *buth* interrelationship, but in other situations the tribes in which these clans have a dominant status are represented as brothers or first cousins. Thus Thiang is said to have been the eldest son of Gee, Nac (Rengyan and Lou) the second son, Ror and other tribes younger sons; and Rengyan (Nac) and Wot (Dit) are said to have been twins, as also Bor and Lang, sons of Meat.

Some tribes stand outside this big family. The Jikany tribes have dominant lineages of Dinka origin, descended from Kir, who was found in a gourd by a man of the Ngok Dinka, but, as was earlier explained, they are mythologically related to the Gee group, because Gee is variously represented as the protector or father-in-law of Kir. The GAATGANKIIR have a *buth* relationship with some lineage system of the Ngok Dinka, and there-

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fore, in an unprecise political sense, the Jikany and Ngok Dinka tribes have, by analogy, a fraternal relationship. It may safely be assumed that at one time they had close intertribal relations. The GAAWAR clan have also an independent origin, their ancestor having descended from heaven. However, a number of mythological links unite him to the founders of various clans which are dominant in tribes of the Ghaak group (see pp. 230–1), and the Gaawar tribe therefore belongs to this group. Although the Nile now separates it from the other members of the group it was at one time their most northern extension on the west bank. Owing to *buth* relationship between GAAWAR and other clans of the family of clans descended from Kwook, Gaawar are said to go with the people of the Fadang section of the Bor tribe and the Atwot people, who are said to have lived at one time between the present Rengyan and Dok tribal areas.

Through the recognition of agnatic relationship between exogamous clans and of cognatic and mythological ties between clans not considered to be agnates, all the Nuer tribes are by assimilation of political to kinship values conceptualized as a single social system. A number of clans are not associated with tribes, but their lineages are included in this system by the affiliation of the clans to one or other of the large families of clans. Thus, the JIMEM, JIKUL, GAATLEAK, and JITHER are descended from Gee and belong to the Gee group; the JIKUL are mythologically attached to the Ril group and the JAKAR to the Ghaak group; and so on. The whole of the Nuer are brought into a single kinship or pseudo-kinship system and all the territorial segments of Nuerland are interconnected by that system.

XIII

In our view the unusual degree of genealogical segmentation in the Nuer lineage system is to be understood in terms of tribal structure, which is, as we have seen, characterized by its tendency towards segmentation. The association of the lineage system with the tribal system means that as the tribe splits into segments so will the clan split into segments, and that the lines of cleavage will tend to coincide, for lineages are not corporate groups but are embodied in local communities through which they function structurally. Just as a man is a member of a tribal

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fires, but they are quickly driven into huts and byres to seek protection amid the smoke of their fires. The doors of the huts are closed tightly, air-holes are blocked, and fires are lit. Mosquito-nets are the only European product, apart from spears, for which the Nuer express any great enthusiasm, but very few, perhaps one in several thousand, possess them.

During my residence at Mancŏm on the Sobat in July, 1935 I was almost eaten alive by mosquitos. My cotton mosquito house afforded me some protection at night but insects soon made holes in it and the mosquitos entered. Moreover, they swarmed outside like a beleaguering army and on my leaving or entering the house battalions invaded it. The worst time was between six and nine o'clock in the morning when hundreds of mosquitos collected in my tent to escape the sun so that it was impossible to sit in it without being repeatedly bitten. One gets little rest, and fever is sooner or later inevitable.

Mosquitos are absent away from pools and river banks in the dry season and even in the vicinity of water—and one must live near water—they are not troublesome from January to May. In the dry season, therefore, the cattle sleep in the open, the herd being surrounded by windscreens in which the Nuer themselves sleep. If a beast of prey approaches people know of its approach by observing that the cattle are restless. The alarm is given and in a moment the whole camp is awake and men rush, with spears in their hands, to the place of danger. I have seen camps awake half the night chasing lions away, for a lion makes many attempts before he acknowledges defeat. But even in the dry season dung fires envelope the camps in smoke at night to protect the cattle from insects.

According to the Nuer it was Woman who first brought mosquitos to the habitations of men. Woman found Mosquito in the open plain and asked him " What do you eat ? " Mosquito replied, " Oh ! grass. Just nothing." Woman said to him, " Well come home with me and we will share our homestead together " When God heard Woman's words he asked her, " What about your husband ? " Woman replied,

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"Oh! He can brush away Mosquito with a bird's wing." God said, "All right." For the first few days Man brushed mosquitos aside. Then he found that it was useless so he suffered them.

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Another unpleasant insect pest is the seroot fly (*röm*). Seroot are seasonal. They flourish on cloudy days from May to July. I have not seen them in this latitude from the end of July to the beginning of May. When I was at Konye in May and at Yakwac in July they appeared in swarms every morning shortly before the cattle were driven to pasture, between 9 and 9.30 a.m. At the same hour every morning I was driven from my tent by their painful stings. Fortunately when the cattle go to pasture the seroot flies accompany them. On most mornings at Konye about two hours after being driven to pasture the herd came stampeding back kicking their legs and lashing out with their tails and dung fires had to be lit in the kraal to protect them. There was no need to tether the cattle for they were only too grateful to be allowed to stand near the fires and let the smoke envelope them. Only when there was a shower of rain did they get any relief in the pastures, for rain drives seroot away. On cloudy rainless days the poor beasts ran back to the village covered with seroot and their flanks stained with blood. On such days they were not able to graze for more than two or three hours.

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By August the seroot has gone but the stumoxis (*wath*) remains. It is a small black biting fly which is present in the rains and, I think, in the dry season also. It is probably responsible for the presence of trypanosomiasis in parts of Nuerland, transferring the trypanosomes directly on its proboscis from beast to beast, for the tsetse (*mi* or *luk liec*) does not occur in Nuerland, except perhaps in parts of Eastern Gaajak country, which I have not visited, though its lethal character is well known to Nuer. Indeed they have probably had to take it into account in their expansion eastwards for there can be little doubt that the main reason for their evacuation of Anuakland, which they conquered as far as the foothills of the Abyssinian escarpment was the loss of their cattle from trypanosomiasis carried by tsetse, which occupy a belt of country at the foot of the escarpment whenever dense forest occurs.

8:Howell E, G-5 (1942-1944)1954
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In giving judgement, a Nuer court will almost always specify the size and sex of the animal to be paid by the defendant. This is especially the case when the defendant is unable to pay immediately, for otherwise he will be expected to name and describe the exact animal he proposes to pay.

In most cases the nature of the claim will be clear to the reader from the context. The administrator who is concerned with the practical application of Nuer law will be wise to master these terms at the outset. The terms are also set out for easy reference in the Glossary at the end of this book.

2. AN INTRODUCTION TO NUER SOCIETY

Origin and History

The Nuer call themselves *Naadh*,[1] which simply means 'people', '*kon nei te Naadh*', 'we are the people of the People', an expression which is sufficiently descriptive for their own purposes and reveals their arrogant belief in their own superiority over other human beings. By other tribes they are often spoken of as Nuer, and to be explicit to the ignorant stranger they will sometimes say '*kon Nuere*', 'we are Nuer'. Their origin remains obscure. Nuer themselves merely say that their ancestors descended from the sky down a convenient rope or by means of an exceptionally large *akot* (*Ficus*) tree which still grows in Jagei country in the centre of Western Nuer District, an area from which they all came. Other theories of their origin seem to me no less conjectural and in the absence of more convincing evidence, we may as well leave it at that.[2] Culturally they are very near to the Dinka, and the two languages have close affinities. They are clearly of the same stock, but it remains a mystery why the Nuer should have emerged as a separate people with comparative suddenness about the beginning of the nineteenth century, driven the Dinka out of so much of their country, seized so many of their women and cattle, and absorbed whole sections of Dinka into their own society. Their extraordinary vitality, expressed in a peculiar vivacity of speech, in physical courage and endurance, their arrogance and democratic outlook coupled with a most engaging sense of humour, make them outstanding among the peoples of the Sudan.

They are divided into a number of 'tribes', the tribe being the largest group which in the past had any real and permanent sense of corporate unity. Each tribe is further divided into segments and subsegments, each occupying a common territory with a common name. Administratively they are now divided into three Districts: Western

[1] Sometimes spelt *Nath*.

[2] See Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer*, p. 3. Fr. J. P. Crazzolara's two recent books on *The Lwoo* (Missioni Africane, Verona, 1950–51) do not provide much further information on Nuer origins.

12:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1930-1931) 1933
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614 their common kinship by a common sentiment towards the clan name and ritual symbols and by the prohibition of marriage between their [613] families. But when they belong to the same minor lineage they recognise their kinship by awareness of the exact relationship in which they stand to one another in the genealogical system. Nevertheless any competent Nuer genealogist can, if pressed, produce a good table of genealogical ascent to the founder of his clan with the result that it is possible, even in such a huge clan as the GAT GAN KIIR of the Jekany tribes, to place every single clansman and clanswoman on a single genealogical chart showing their genealogical descent from Kir and, therefore, the genealogical relationship of any clansman to any other clansman. Such a chart would not be likely to embody a correct genealogy, but it would be recognised by the Nuer as being substantially correct.

614 619 Consequently one cannot say that relationship ends with the clan or that it is the largest of Nuer lineages, but we have to define it as the largest exogamous lineage. For the common ancestor of most Nuer clans is the same person. Jackson has given a very good account of the way in which the Nuer clans are part of a related system which I propose to call the Family of Nuer Clans. It is necessary to say that it is not at all clear from Jackson's or other accounts, including my own notes, how this family of clans are inter-related. It is particularly a problem which requires detailed research among the "Homeland Nuer" to the west of the Nile. One of the reasons why it is difficult to draw more than an approximate tree of the Family of Nuer Clans is the confusion which has always existed between the tribe and the clan, with the inevitable result that when we are told that Lou or Lak are sons of such-and-such an ancestor we are helpless, since tribesmen of Lou and Lak form political aggregates of composite ancestry and cannot possibly have common ancestors. What is meant is that the dominant clan element of the tribe are the sons of the such-and-such an ancestor, but as his tree of descent is not given it is difficult to proceed upon such a supposition.

614 173 773 [776] I will condense here the main discoveries of Mr. Jackson in this field, together with the writings of the late Capt. Fergusson and notes taken by myself. There figure in all accounts certain mythical persons who link the ancestors of the Nuer clans to Kwoth, God, who made them and from whom they are directly descended. In this essay the first persons we need notice are Gee and Ghaak, two brothers who are possibly to be

12:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1930-1931) 1933
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614 173 773 regarded as historical personages. According to Jackson's account, from A'ak (his spelling for Ghaak) are sprung Nuong, Dok, Jaluk, Qwei (Beiq (Gad) Quaish)[1] (spellings in this paper are Nyuong, Dok, Jaluk, Kwe, Beegh, Gaatkwac, for these tribes) and from Ga'a (Jackson's spelling of Gee) are sprung Bor,[2] Lang,[2] Raiyung,[3] Wott,[3], Ror,[2] Bull, Leiq,[3] Lak,[3] Tiung,[3] Lau,[3] Keirluwal[3] (spellings in this paper are Bör, Läng, Rengyan, Wot, Ror, Bul, Lek, Lak, Thiang, Lou, Kärlual, for these tribes). All the Nuer clans, with few exceptions, fit into this family. It is not at all clear, however, from Jackson's account who are the ancestors of many of the clans he lists, since he speaks of tribes as though they were clans. And, indeed, the Nuer himself often speaks in the same manner, identifying linguistically the tribe with the dominant clan element of the area in which it lives. Thus they may speak of Lou as being descended from Denac when what they mean is that the dominant clan of Lou country are descendants from Denac. It is, therefore, impossible at present to draw up a genealogical table which will show the descent of all the Nuer clans who spring from Gee and his brother. On the eastern side of the Nile, among the Lou, at any rate, one only hears of Gee and not of his brother. In this tribe people speak as though you were either a pure Nuer descended ultimately from Gee or a Dinka or a descendant of Wär or Kir.

Kir, the founder of the GAT GAN KIIR, who form the nucleus of the Jikany tribes, was, according to all accounts, found in a gourd by the Ngok Dinka and was brought up by them. He later married three daughters of Gee by whom he gave birth to the major lineages of his clan, the GAAJOK, the three GAAJAK, and the GAAGWONG. The GAT GAN KIIR clan is, therefore, attached through its mothers to the lineage of Gee.

All accounts equally agree in saying that Wär, the ancestor of the GAAWÄR clan, who are, presumably, the dominant element in the Gaawär tribe, fell down from heaven. Jackson says that he was brought up by A'ak and that his descendants are considered to have attached themselves to the Ghaak division of the Nuer nation.

[1] Jackson says that Beiq and Quaish belong to A'ak, but he does not give A'ak as their ancestor in the following paragraph nor in his genealogical tables, *id.* pp. 72 and 79.

[2] All born of the same mother. All west bank tribes.

[3] Najh, Reill and Tiung are three sons of one mother. Najh is the ancestor of Raiyung and Lau and Reill the ancestor of Keirlual, Leiq and Lak.

12:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1930-1931) 1933
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614 The ancestor of the JIKUL clan is also said to have fallen down from
173 heaven, and Jackson says that he was fostered by Gee to whose division
773 his descendants considered themselves attached. Nowhere do they form a dominant clan element in a tribe but are scattered among many tribes.

The late Capt. Fergusson speaks of these two national divisions as Ghraark and Gair. On the western bank Ghraark are Nuong, Adok, and Gwai ; and Gair are Bul, Lake, Jakaing, Bur, Naijh, Wad, and Lung.[1]

619 Considering the confusion which has existed between clan and tribe,
614 Jackson's classification into the Gee and Ghaak[2] groups cannot be regarded as exact though it may well be conventional. I was given a somewhat similar division myself by a man from the west bank of the Nile. But it appears at first sight that there are two pertinent criticisms of the classification. In the first place several clans are obviously missing, e.g., JIDIET and JIMEM. In the second place it is doubtful what line of descent is reckoned when speaking of a tribe as descended from Gee or Ghaak, e.g., the Lak tribe apparently comprises two main lineages, *gaat twot* Dok, children of Dok aristocrats, and *gaat nya* Legni, children of Lek aristocrats through the female line and of doubtful parentage through the male line. Whilst, even if this is correct, they would both belong to the Gee group of clans in a conventional grouping it is of some importance to know their exact mode of descent.[3] Under the circumstances we can only make a conventional classification which is a mixture of clan and tribal units and wait till further research elucidates the true state of affairs. It is possible that the Family of Nuer Clans is correctly described in confused and hazy terms, since it may well be conceived by the Nuer without logical system. For it may be pointed out that errors are often not the fault of observers like Jackson or myself but are due to the hazy notions which the Nuer themselves have about their ancestry, at any rate on collateral lines. Thus one well-informed man told me that the aristocratic lineages of Lou, Rengyan, and Thiang tribes are all descended from Denac by his three

[1] Unpublished Government report.

[2] Besides A'ak (Jackson) and Ghraark I have heard the name Gwea, and one old man said that there were three brothers, Gee, Ghaak, and Gwea—Ghaak producing the aristocratic lineages in Kwe, Jaluk, Beegh countries, and Gwea producing the aristocratic lineages in Dok, Nyuong, Gaaktwac, and Rol countries.

[3] One informant, Tut, said that the Gaawăr tribe count as belonging to the Ghaak group and the Lak tribe as belonging to the Gee group, though it is difficult to know exactly what he meant.

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the same footing as an ordinary resident born into the community. On the other hand I was told by some Eastern Jekany Nuer at Nasser that once a Dinka always a Dinka was the rule, and that the children and grandchildren of Dinkas never counted as equal to pure Nuer in blood-cattle assessment. I regard this statement, however, as being, in all probability, too rigidly formulated.

The second element in a Nuer village are the *rul*. A *rul* is a stranger, one who is not a member of the *diel*, one who has no place in the lineage of the dominant clan. Such people may be more numerous than the clan itself but they have not the same hereditary status in the tribe. Sometimes their lineages compose powerful tribal sections and in these sections they form a dominant lineage of their own. They are linked by sociological ties, often mythological in form, to the *diel* of the tribe. Thus the powerful sections of Reng and Kŏng of the Gaajak tribe are not *diel* but *rul*. The Reng section is united to the genealogy of Kir by the supposition that Reng the founder of some of its lineages (Col and Dhilleak) was equivalent to *gat manlen* (mother's sister's son) to Kir, his mother being a sister to the Ngok Dinka woman who nursed Kir and brought him up, while the founder of another lineage of this section, the Kŏng, was a man called Tik, who is described in the Kir myths as having given him supernatural assistance and saved his life from avengers. The Jemac and Jaajoah clans, which give their names to two secondary tribal sections[1] of the Lou tribe, are not of the dominant Lou clan, the Jinaca, but are nuclei of two large segments which, together with the Gaaliek section, comprise the Mor moiety. Here again there is a myth which unites them to the *diel* of the tribe. Denac (Nac) is said to have had four sons, Yin, Dak, Bal and Bany, by one wife, and Nyaang and two brothers, who are nameless, by another wife. Nyaang's two brothers were killed by a strange monster, which figures often in Nuer mythology, and is known as a *let*. When the sons of Denac went fishing the four full brothers went on their own and Nyaang by himself, for he would not accompany his brothers. Consequently when he caught a fish someone would come and steal it from him as he was all by himself. When he came home he would not sit on the ground facing his father as the other sons did but sat apart by himself with his back to his father and gazing in the opposite direction. When his father asked him what was the matter with him, he replied that he was thinking of his two

[1] In the Jemac section are included the important Jaagweth lineage who are supposed to be distantly related to the Jemac.

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554 614 619 173 773 brothers whom the *let* had eaten. His father said to him, "Never mind, take your two sisters and let them be your brothers." So in future when Nyaang went fishing he went with his sisters Nyabil and Fadwai. Nyaang is the founder of the GAALIEK lineage, Nyabil of the JEMAC lineage, Fadwei of the JAAJOAH lineage. Whenever we find large sections living as *rul* in a tribe we may expect to discover that bonds have been created between them and the *diel* by myths of the kind cited above. This mythological patent gives them a status in the tribe which is nearly equal to that of the *diel* and amounts to adoption into their kinship framework. [611] This is often accomplished in Nuer society through the kinship value of the mother's line, for although lineages are, for purposes of descent, reckoned widest through the male line and comprise only agnates in respect to the inheritance of certain clan heirlooms, nevertheless descent through the female line has powerful recognition and there is a tendency for the kinship group to take the form of an association of cognates, of men and their sons and daughters and the children of sons and daughters. When strangers come to live in the village of *diel* and marry into their families there is always a drive towards matrilocal conditions, and descent through the mother is stressed so that the lineage of the strangers' sons is traced to the mother and through her linked to the clan of *diel*. We have already cited a good example of this process in the case of the JEMAC and JAAJOAH clans who trace their descent to the name of their ancestresses while the names of their husbands have been forgotten. Nevertheless, in spite of this, they form separate exogamous groups since they cannot be members of the clan of their ancestresses. They are *gaat nyal*, children of daughters, in contrast to *gaat twot*, children of "bulls" or children of sons. However, in some respects the original daughter who gave birth to the stranger's lineage is treated as though she had been a son, as the myth about Nyaang explicitly states, so that the lineage which springs from her still grows on her own genealogical tree. In this way there is always a tendency to translate bonds of contiguity into bonds of kinship.

554 614 619 621 Not all strangers form such important lineages as the THIANG, JEMAC, JAAJOAH (Lou tribe), GAAT TIEK, GAAT REANG (Gaajak tribe). Many *rul* are members of small lineages of strangers living in the midst of other small foreign lineages all of which are aggregated around a nucleus of *gaat twot*. Thus in Lou country, among the Lou aristocratic element, the

14: Huffman M-5 (no date) 1931
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'When God created the people, he created man, and he created the cow, and dura for the people to eat, and goats to eat. He made a spear and a fish-spear, and a dancing stick, such a one as is wrapped with gold. He made the elephant, giraffe, buffalo, teang, waterbuck, reed-buck and gazelle—the yellow and white one, the pig, the cattle-eating lion and the man-eating lion, the hyena, the leopard, the civet-cat and the fox, the rat, the crocodile and hippopotamus, the fish, turtle and snake, the heglig, nabag and ardeb trees, the talh tree, the deleb palm, the kwar and lwal trees. 773

'And God said to the men: "You are my children, whom I have created; you are four, this is the Dinka, this is the Shilluk, this is the Nubian, and this man shall rule over you; he has the gun, his name is Cwalcotke, he is also called the Turk. He has no cows, but you shall be caught by him, he shall govern."'

Prayers and sacrifices are offered to Kot on important incidents of life. Here is a prayer for a sick person: 'Oh God, let the man recover, let him become well, that he may get strength again. God, what is this? Leave the sick one with us, let him recover. Return to thine own body. Take thy cow, for she was ordered for the deliverance of souls. It is thee thyself who said thus. Take the cow that she may deliver the soul of the sick one. It is thou who created us, it is the cow that delivers souls. Here is the goat, and the wild cucumber. Let him recover! In what have we wronged? Give us the soul of the sick one. Thou art our father. Why shall we suffer from sickness all days? Give us the soul, we pray thee, our great-grandfather.' 782

At a burial the following prayer is offered: 'Oh God, why dost thou pursue us? Return thyself, take this thy dead man and go; let him be sufficient, do not look at us

14: Huffman M-5 (no date) 1931
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Chapter One

THE TRIBE—HISTORY AND APPEARANCE

101 THE Nuer tribe are found in the southern part of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan in the Nasser and Abwong districts and also on the Zeraf island and along the Nile.

161 At the Rejaf Language Conference in 1928, the Nuer population was estimated as 430,000.

565 There are a certain number of Nuer who constitute what they call their 'aristocracy'. These are not supposed to intermarry as they are considered as one family. They are called 'dil'. A chief is always a 'dil'.

622 There are various chiefs in different parts of Nuerland, but their individual domains are not large. The people do not make obeisance before them as other tribesmen do when in the presence of their chief. But they show them respect and preference in many ways. If a chief is among those waiting to go across the river in canoes, he is always accorded a place in the first canoe to go across.

Then there are chiefs of the leopard skin, which position is hereditary. These chiefs wear a leopard skin over the shoulders, which is the insignia of their position and authority.

STORIES OF ORIGIN

773 The Nuer have a number of stories of their origin in folk-lore tales which are handed down from one generation to another. They have a firm belief in these tales of long ago. 'Would our people lie to us?' they ask.

A very large gourd is supposed to have fallen down from heaven. In it were a spear, a leopard's skin, and a person. This person they call Kiir and he is the father of the first Nuer.

173 They also tell the following tale about the time when the Nuer first came to the country they now inhabit.

16: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1956
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tions are to be understood as modes of God and not as his essence, which is Spirit.

God being above, everything above is associated with him. This is why the heavenly bodies and the movements and actions connected with them are associated with him. This is why also the spirits of the air are regarded as *gaat kwoth*, children of God, in a way other spirits are not, for they, unlike other spirits, dwell in the air and are also thought of as being in the clouds, which are nearest to the sky. This is why also the *colwic* spirits are so closely associated with God, for he touched them with his fire from heaven and took them to himself. Some birds also are spoken about by Nuer as *gaat kwoth*, especially those which fly high and seem, to us as well as to Nuer, to belong to heaven rather than to earth and therefore to be children of light and symbols of the divine. The feeling that they are in a measure detached from the earth is enhanced in the case of migratory birds[1] by their disappearances and reappearances. I have heard the idea expressed that in their absence from Nuerland they have gone to visit God's country. This is probably no more than poetic fancy, but we can say that the disappearance of these birds strengthens the allegory of God's children which arises from their ability to do what man cannot do, fly towards heaven and God. Twins also, in a very special sense, are *gaat kwoth*. They belong to the above, and Nuer say that they are birds. The Jikul clan and the Gaanwar clan, whose ancestors fell from heaven, are also *ji kwoth*, God's people, for that reason and are thought to have special powers.

Thus anything associated with the sky has virtue which is lacking in earthly things. Nuer pathetically compare man to heavenly things. He is *ran piny*, an earthly person and, according to the general Nuer view, his ghost is also earth-bound. Between God and man, between heaven and earth, there is a great gulf, and we shall find that an appreciation of the symbolism of the polarity of heaven and earth helps us to understand Nuer religious thought and feeling and also sheds light on certain social features of their religion, for example the greater prestige of prophets than of priests.

[1] I am indebted to Miss Ray Huffman and Dr. Mary Smith for the information that, among others, these are the pied crow, the kite, the pelican, the maribou stork, the eagle, the crested crane, the Cape Paradise flycatcher, the wagtail, and the durra-birds.

16: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1956
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776 196 contexts means speech, talk, or word, but when used in prayers and invocations in the phrase '*e rwacdu*', 'it is thy word', it means the will of God; and when used in reference to creation it has almost the meaning of the creative word: 'he created the world, it is his word'.

773 The Nuer can hardly be said to have a creation myth, though our authorities[1] record some fragmentary accounts of the creation of men, parts of which I have myself heard. These state that men were created in the Jagei country of western Nuerland at a certain tamarind tree, at the foot of which offerings, and according to Mr. Jackson sacrifices, were sometimes made till it was destroyed by [171] fire in 1918. Many details in the versions given by Mr. Jackson and Captain Fergusson are clearly foreign, either Dinka or in Mr. Jackson's account Shilluk and in Captain Fergusson's account possibly even Atwot or Mandari, and I regard Father Crazzolara's version as the closest to Nuer tradition. In this version the tamarind tree, called Lic, was itself the mother of men who, according to one account, emerged from a hole at its foot or, according to another account, dropped off its branches like ripe fruits.

776 761 Whether they are speaking about events which happened *ne walka*, in the beginning or long ago, or about happenings of yesterday or today, God, creative Spirit, is the final Nuer explanation of everything. When asked how things began or how they have come to be what they are they answer that God made them or that it was his will that they have come to be what they are. The heavens and the earth and the waters on the earth, and the beasts and birds and reptiles and fish were made by him, and he is the author of custom and tradition. The Nuer herd cattle and cultivate millet and spear fish because God gave them these things for their sustenance. He instituted their marriage prohibitions. He gave ritual powers to some men and not to others. He decreed that the Nuer should raid the Dinka and that Europeans should conquer the Nuer. He made one man black and another white [826] (according to one account our white skins are a punishment by God for incest committed by our ancestor with his mother), one man fleet and another slow, one strong and another weak. Everything in nature, in culture, in society, and in men is as it is because

[1] H. C. Jackson, 'The Nuer of the Upper Nile Province', *Sudan Notes and Records*, 1923, pp. 70–71; V. H. Fergusson, 'The Nuong Nuer', ibid., 1921, pp. 148–9; J. P. Crazzolara, op. cit., p. 66.

16: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1956
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which can only be symbolized, as his ubiquitous presence is symbolized by the Nuer, by the metaphor of wind and air. Also he can be communicated with through prayer and sacrifice, and a certain kind of contact with him is maintained through the social order he is said to have instituted and of which he is the guardian, a matter I discuss briefly later. But in spite of these communications and contacts the distance between heaven and earth is too great to be bridged.

God's separation and remoteness from man are accounted for in a myth recorded by Father Crazzolara which relates that there was not always a complete separation of heaven and earth and that there might never have been but for an almost fortuitous event. I did not myself hear Father Crazzolara's version of the myth, and I judge it to be of Dinka origin, partly because it occurs among the Dinka but more because I think it is very probably only current among Nuer to the west of the Nile,[1] which would indicate recent introduction into Nuerland from Dinka sources; but, whether it is Dinka or not, it accords well with Nuer religious conceptions in general. The myth relates that there was once a rope from heaven to earth and how anyone who became old climbed up by it to God in heaven and after being rejuvenated there returned to earth. One day a hyena—an appropriate figure in a myth relating to the origin of death—and what is known in the Sudan as a durra-bird, most likely a weaver-bird, entered heaven by this means. God gave instructions that the two guests were to be well watched and not allowed to return to earth where they would certainly cause trouble. One night they escaped and climbed down the rope, and when they were near the earth the hyena cut the rope and the part above the cut was drawn upwards towards heaven. So the connexion between heaven and earth was cut and those who grow old must now die, for what had happened could not be made not to have happened ('aber was geschehen war, konnte nicht mehr ungeschehen gemacht werden'). A variant of this myth has been recorded by Captain Fergusson.[2]

[1] This conjecture is strengthened by information from Dr. Mary Smith that the story is not known to the Eastern Jikany Nuer. A version current among the Central Nuer is recorded in *The Nuer*, p. 230.

[2] J. P. Crazzolara, op. cit., p. 68; V. H. Fergusson, op. cit., pp. 148–9.

GOD

II

It is in the light of their feeling that man is dependent on God and helpless without his aid and that God, though a friend and present, is yet also remote that we are to interpret a word Nuer frequently use about themselves when speaking to or about God: *doar*. The meanings of this word given in Nuer–English dictionaries, 'idiot', 'stupid', 'fool', and 'weak-minded', do not adequately convey the sense of the word, especially when it is used to refer to man's relationship to God. Then it means rather 'simple' or 'foolish' or 'ignorant'—'idiot' in the sense the word used to have in the English language and which the word from which it is derived had in Greek. Nuer say that they are just ignorant people who do not understand the mysteries of life and death, and of God and the spirits, and why things happen as they do. 776x 781

A favourite Nuer expression is *'yie wicda'*, 'my head goes round' or 'I am bewildered'. They are at a loss because they are just foolish people who do not understand the why and the wherefore. In saying that they are simple or foolish or ignorant Nuer are not being modest in respect to other peoples, though I have often had the impression that they regard themselves as guileless compared with other peoples, especially compared with the Dinka, whom they regard as cleverer and more cunning than themselves, a difference dramatized in one of their myths. The story, which reminds us of that of Esau and Jacob, is cited by Nuer to explain why they have always raided the Dinka. Nuer and Dinka—the peoples are personified in the myth—were both sons of God, who had promised to give an old cow to Dinka and its young calf to Nuer. Dinka came by night to God's byre and deceived him by imitating Nuer's voice, and God gave him the calf. When God found that he had been deceived he charged Nuer to raid the herds of Dinka to the end of time. In other words, the Nuer may be robbers but the Dinka are thieves. Another story relates that God offered men the choice between cattle and rifles. Nuer and Dinka chose cattle and Arabs and Europeans chose rifles. Here both Nuer and Dinka are figured as simple compared to Arabs and Europeans. Nuer regard themselves as having manly virtues exceeding those of other peoples, but compared with them they are artless. However, when they use the word *doar* in a religious context they are speaking of themselves being foolish in 186 773 781 776x

16: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1956
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one was most embarrassed and I was later taken aside by a Nuer friend and told that I must never make such comments. On another occasion I got into trouble for asking a man in jest, and, I admit, in bad taste, whether it was food or beer inside him, for his belly was as tight as a drum. I was told that my question might well make the man sick, and one of those present said that once a man had remarked to him, 'Well, you are full', and shortly afterwards he was violently sick. The worst offence is to praise a baby. In referring to it one should use some such expression as '*giakeme*', 'this bad thing'. When blessing children by spitting on them, which is the Nuer manner of showing favour to a child, kinsmen, and more especially kinswomen, utter some opprobrious remarks, sometimes a string of obscenities, over them.

The idea here is not that of the evil eye (*peth*), though the two ideas may in some ways resemble one another and also overlap.[1] In Nuer opinion the evil eye is an act of covetousness or envy, whereas here, I think, the emphasis is on the danger of rejoicing in unusual good fortune lest it should be taken away. There is a feeling that God evens things out, so that if he helps the needy he may take away from those with superfluity. As I understood their view it expresses a certain uneasiness at attention being drawn to possessions lest pride should bring about retribution. That this is their view is further suggested by a number of their stories which relate how God punished presumptuousness. I mention only one in this place, a short myth which reminds us of the story of Elijah and the priests of Baal and which is obviously either taken from some foreign people or is a fairly recent creation of Nuer imaginative thought, because it is about the *Turuk*, Turks, and their rifles. The word *Turuk* means in Nuer, as it does in the languages of many of the black peoples of the Southern Sudan, all lighter-skinned northerners with whom they have had dealings during the last hundred years, that is, Turks, Egyptians, Arabs, and Nubians of the Northern Sudan, and ourselves and other Europeans. The 'Turks' compared their rifles to God's thunder, and there was a trial of strength between them and God. God made a huge mud image of an elephant and told the 'Turks' to shoot at it, which they did to no effect. God then brought clouds and darkness and thunder and lightning and smashed the image

[1] *Yop* is presumably the same word as the Shilluk *yuop* which Wilhelm Hofmayr (*Die Schilluk*, 1925, p. 221) translates by '*böse Blick*'.

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777 to dust and killed many of the 'Turks' as well because they had
×776 compared the rifle he had given them to his power. The point of
●773 this story is not merely that God was stronger than the 'Turks'
but that he was in the right and the 'Turks' were at fault.

× 776 This brings me to an extremely important Nuer concept, an
577 understanding of which is very necessary to a correct appreciation
196 of their religious thought and practice. This is the concept of *cuong*. This word can mean 'upright' in the sense of standing, as, for example, in reference to the supports of byres. It is also used figuratively for 'firmly established', as in the phrase *'be gole cuong'*, 'may his hearth stand', which has the sense of *stet fortuna domus*. It is most commonly employed, however, with the meaning of 'in the right' in both a forensic and a moral sense. The discussion in what we would call legal cases is for the purpose of determining who has the *cuong*, the right, in the case, or who has the most right; and in any argument about conduct the issue is always whether a person has conformed to the accepted norms of social life, for, if he has, then he has *cuong*, he has right on his side. We are concerned with the concept here both because it relates directly to man's behaviour towards God and other spiritual beings and the ghosts and because it relates to God in a more indirect way, in that he is regarded as the founder and guardian of morality. Up to this point I have been describing Nuer ideas about the nature of God. I shall now describe their ideas about what God requires of them.

III

I do not want to suggest that God is thought to be an immediate sanction for all conduct, but I must emphasize that the Nuer are of one voice in saying that sooner or later and in one way or another good will follow right conduct and ill will follow wrong conduct. People may not reap their rewards for good acts and punishments for bad acts for a long time, but the consequences of both follow behind (*gwor*) them and in the end catch up on those responsible for them. You give milk to a man when he has no lactating cows, or meat and fish to him when he is hungry, or you befriend him in other ways, though he is no close kinsman of yours. He blesses you, saying that your age-mates will die while

was done in error. Similarly, they say that he will not allow a curse to harm a man who has done no deliberate wrong.

One can make too rigid distinctions between the meanings of words, and while an error or accident is clearly regarded by Nuer as different from a deliberate and premeditated act, the concepts of *gwac* and *duer* shade into each other. There is perhaps always an element of the unintentional in the worst fault, and a Nuer who has committed a bad fault is inclined to excuse himself, as we would do, by calling it a mistake; but it is also true that, except in matters of no moment, and although the consequences may not be so severe, a wrong act is always a fault, whether it was deliberate or was due merely to forgetfulness or even involuntary, and may involve liability. Thus the men who in ignorance have relations with the same girl, the man who unknowingly has relations with a kinswoman, and the man who by mistake eats the flesh of his totem have all committed *dueri*, faults, and they cannot be certain that evil consequences will not follow. The effects may be the same as if the acts had been wilful. Likewise a man who inadvertently eats from a dish from which a man with whom his kin have a blood-feud has eaten, and a man who appears naked before a kinswoman of his wife (Nuer men normally have no covering), not having noticed her presence, have committed faults. It may well happen that a man does not know he has done wrong till he suffers the consequences of the wrong. For example, a man takes a woman for concubine not knowing that she is distantly related to him, and his children by her die. He then makes inquiries and discovers the relationship. He sinned, like Oedipus, in ignorance, but that did not alter what he had done and, like Oedipus, he paid the penalty of his fault. Even the innocent may suffer, as the example I have just given shows.[1] Indeed the whole human race suffers death on account of what was no more than a trivial oversight. If man had prevented the hyena and the durra-bird from escaping from heaven there would have been no death. This is the lesson of another story, probably also of Dinka origin, recounted by Father Crazzolara about the origin of death. It makes death follow from a mere blunder or a trifling act of malice. When man was created God took a piece of a gourd vessel and threw it into water to indicate that man would live for ever just as the rind would float for ever on the water. He then sent a

[1] Op. cit., p. 67.

barren, or divorced, woman to men to tell them that they would live for ever, but, in delivering her message, she threw, instead of a piece of gourd, a potsherd into the water, and it sank. Almost fortuitous though this incident was, what had happened, as we have noted before, could not be made not to have happened. Men have to accept the consequences of actions whether they are deliberate or not.

Hence when Nuer suffer misfortune they ponder how it may have come about, for it follows from what has just been said and from the fact we noted earlier that God is always in the right, that if misfortune comes to a man it is most likely on account of some fault. This is why on such occasions one hears so often in Nuer prayers and invocations the plaint 'what have we done?' or 'what evil have we done?' and why Nuer sacrifices are so often propitiations, expiations, atonements, and purifications. It is therefore probable that suffering usually entails a measure of guilt. Nuer search their consciences to discover what fault might have brought it on them, though this is more evident when a misfortune is only pending and may yet be stayed or though it has fallen may yet be mitigated, for if the fault can be determined they will know better what action to take. When the misfortune is complete and their condition can in no way be alleviated they are less interested in its cause and accept its accomplishment with sorrow and resignation.

When Nuer suffer they sometimes at once know what is the cause of their suffering because they are well aware of some particular fault. They sometimes, as we would say, tempt God by doing what they know to be wrong, hoping that it will not matter very much, such as having relations with a woman which are incestuous but not very incestuous. If trouble comes they know that this is the cause, for they have said that whether the relationship was too close for congress would be decided by any consequences of it. They now discover that it was more serious than they thought. Nuer often neglect their duties to their various spirits. They omit or forget to sacrifice to them or they fail to dedicate cows to them or they use cows dedicated to them for marriage and find that they cannot replace them or do not trouble to do so. If a misfortune falls on them they then know that it is due to the anger of a spirit. Often, however, they are in doubt about the cause and confused and bewildered. It may be that the

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776 the word to denote a relationship between a social group and a natural species or a class of objects and 'totemistic' when the relationship tends to concern individuals rather than social groups. The distinction is not, however, a vital one and need not therefore be rigorously maintained; and such being the case, the word 'totem' may serve to denote the species or class in both instances. The same species, that is to say, may be the totem of a lineage (a totemic relationship) or of individuals (a totemistic relationship). I use the expressions 'totemic spirit' and 'totemistic spirit', as the case may be, to designate the *kwoth* of the species or class which is totem to a group or individual. Nuer distinguish between the spirit and the creature in which it may be said in some sense to make its appearance, for example, between the lion-spirit and the lion. It is to the spirit and not to the creature that Nuer devote cattle of the bridewealth of their daughters and to which they make sacrifice. Before discussing this problem further I give some examples of relationships between lineages and the natural species they are said to respect and from which they sometimes take their spear-names and honorific titles.

776 613 [773] 782 Some lineages respect lions. One of them, the *Leng* lineage of the Jinaca clan, say that the lion is their totem because their ancestor Gilgil was born twin to a lion. When they sacrifice to the lion-spirit, they are said to take a leg of the victim into the bush and leave it there, calling on the lions to come and eat their share, which I have heard described as the share of the *jibuthni*, the people of a collateral lineage (p. 287). I fancy that what is meant is that a token piece of meat is thrown into the bush and that it is spoken about as a leg. It is said that if a man who has the lion for totem injures a lion he may beget a son with nails like claws. I was told of a man that he took a spear belonging to a member of the Leng lineage, a neighbour of his, and killed a lion with it, and that shortly afterwards another lion killed a number of beasts of the Leng man's herd. It was proposed that the people should go out to hunt the animal, but after discussion it was decided that it would not be just to do so because the lion had right (*cuong*) on its side. Instead, the man who had killed the first lion with the spear of its totemic kinsman compensated him for the loss of his cattle and a sacrifice was made to the lion-spirit. After compensation and atonement had been made the second lion gave no more trouble. My friend Cam of the village of Yakwac

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776 613 respect the monitor lizard. The story is told that long ago some people of *cieng* Gangni were dying of thirst on a journey. They were wandering, light-headed with thirst and the heat of the sun, when they saw a monitor lizard in a *thep*-tree (*Acacia verugera*). They intended to kill it but it escaped them and following it brought them to water, to which, being a water creature, it naturally made. Ever since, their descendants have respected the lizard and dedicated cows of their herds to the lizard-spirit. I was told that if there is one of them present when a Nuer of a different clan kills one of these lizards, as apparently sometimes happens, he throws a bead or some grass on to its body to make recompense (*ba je col*), because he saw his totem killed. I was told also that should a man of *cieng* Gangni knowingly eat of its flesh he would die, while should he eat of it unknowingly he might fall sick or become crazy. Nuer also say that should a man who respects the lizard harm it he may beget a child with deformed legs resembling the legs of the lizard. The *cieng* Gangni also respect the *thep*-tree for the reason given in the story I have related and, though why I do not know, the *keac* tree (*Crataeva religiosa*) and *pak*, the Dead Sea apple (*Calotropis procera*). One of their spear-names is *mut thep*, the spear of the *thep*-tree, and one of their honorific titles is *gat thep*, son of the *thep*-tree.

There are a number of lineages in different parts of Nuerland who respect crocodiles and dedicate cows to the crocodile-spirit, the Cany major lineage of the eastern Gaajak being one of the largest. The reason given for the totemic relationship is a twin-birth of an ancestor with a crocodile's egg, the egg having been placed in a stream. I was told that a twin-birth of this kind may occur at any time in a lineage which respects the crocodile. Members of these lineages are said sometimes to milk the cows dedicated to the crocodile-spirit and to pour the milk into a stream in which there are crocodiles. One of their honorific clan-names may be *nya nyanga*, daughter of the crocodile. It is said that should a man who respects crocodiles harm one of the reptiles without cause, or eat its flesh, he may beget a child with a rudimentary arm resembling a crocodile's leg; and I was told of a woman of one of these lineages who ate crocodile flesh, thinking that it was turtle flesh, and afterwards bore a child so deformed that it had to crawl on its belly. Those who respect crocodiles enjoy a special immunity from their attacks and I have been

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assured by old men when about to wade through crocodile-infested streams that I need have no fear, because people whose totem was the crocodile lived nearby, and they contrasted the benevolence of their local crocodiles with the savagery of crocodiles in other districts. When once I remarked to a Nuer about a man fishing far out in the Sobat river, in a place I knew to be infested with crocodiles, that I thought he was taking a big risk, my companion simply replied 'maybe he respects crocodiles'. I have also been told that men of these lineages call the reptiles out of the water and stroke them. There can be no doubt that people who have the crodile for totem are regarded by other Nuer as having some control over them. They are summoned by their neighbours to perform a rite to prevent crocodiles from attacking them or their flocks and herds when streams and rivers must be crossed. The *gwan kwoth nyanga*, the person who possesses the crocodile-spirit (who has the crocodile for totem), bends a metal bracelet till the ends overlap and binds them in this position with grass, and then presses the bracelet into the river mud, calling on *gwandong*, grandfather or ancestor (in this context, the crocodile-spirit), to let the people pass over in safety. This operation closes the jaws of the crocodiles while people and cattle are in the water. He may also, on certain occasions, as when a stream is being fished, bind a goat and push it under weeds and reeds into the stream for the crocodile-spirit at the same time as performing the bracelet rite; and it is said that he must then sit on the bank and abstain from drinking water while people are still in the stream.

A large number of small lineages in Nuerland respect snakes. All those whose descent I was able to trace are of Dinka origin. Some respect *nyal*, the python. Those I have asked about their totemic affiliation have told me that a python was born as twin to their ancestor. When they sacrifice to the python-spirit they take a goat to the edge of the stream and there kill it, in imitation of the python's killing of its prey, by blocking its mouth and nostrils and bouncing on its belly till it suffocates. They throw a piece of the sacrificial meat into the stream and another piece towards the land. They boil the rest of the meat, taking care that no soup of the boiling is spilt, and eat it. A senior man then sharpens a new cattle-peg and, after driving it into the ground and winding grass round it, pours some of the blood of the goat at its foot, asking the python-spirit to take its 'cow' and let the

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people be at peace. They complete the rite by building a small mound of ashes as a shrine (*yik*) to the spirit. I have seen goats with what the Nuer call *ma nyal*, python-like, markings dedicated to the python-spirit in kraals. A Lou tribesman told me that when he was a boy a python entered his father's kraal and paid particular attention to a goat dedicated to its spirit, and his father gave it milk in a gourd and rubbed its scales with butter. All Nuer say that if any snake enters the homestead of a man who respects that species he will offer it milk and rub its scales with butter, but I have not seen this done. They say that a snake which has been treated with these courtesies may enter the byre and sleep there and, when it wakes, crawl among the cattle in the kraal, paying friendly attention to the cow or beast of the flock dedicated to its spirit. A man who respects pythons respects also bees, because Nuer consider their markings to be like those of the python, and will not kill them or eat their honey.

Another snake respected by a large number of small lineages of Dinka descent is *lualdit* or *rir*, which I believe to be the tree cobra. A Nuer of the Leek tribe told me how this totem had come into his family, and his story has some interest in that it illustrates the way in which a lineage may acquire a totem. His father was digging a hole in which to plant a support to a new cattle byre when he scooped up a cobra with the earth in his hands. In his fright he killed it with a digging-stick. Later he fell sick and the form of a cobra appeared to him in a dream and told him that it wanted a *duor*, a gift, so he sacrificed an ox to the cobra-spirit and dedicated a cow to it. His sons now respect the cobra, and their descendants may continue to do so. During my first expedition to Nuerland one of my Zande servants was chased into my tent by one of these cobras and I was forced to shoot it. Later in the day a man of the cattle camp where I was residing came to complain that I had killed his *kwoth*, totem, when I might easily have sent to ask him to remove it from my tent. He demanded compensation, which I made with a lump of tobacco. Some people say that if you can kill a cobra without it seeing you, you will find *wal*, medicine, inside it. If it sees you it will spit out the medicine before you can kill it. Those who respect the cobra respect also the little red soldier ants, here again apparently on account of a resemblance of colour.[1] When bitten by them they do not slap them on their

[1] Dr. Lienhardt tells me that a beast dedicated to the spirit of cobra should

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776 613 bodies and kill them as other Nuer do, but they carefully remove them and place them on the ground. When my camp in the eastern Jikany country was overrun by these insects and I tried to drive them out with fire, some men whose totem they were protested, and they requested me not to harm the ants. When a man sees his totem being harmed he feels it an obligation to make a formal protest and he may ask for a gift to remove the offence, but he does not make it occasion for a quarrel. Miss Ray Huffman relates (in a letter) how many years ago she and a fellow missionary, Mr. Adair, killed a cobra just outside the Nasser mission compound. The people of the homestead where it was killed showered grain on its body to cover it 'so the god in it would not be angry with them for letting it be killed'. However, I should record Mr. Jackson's statement that a dispenser of Malakal hospital, presumably a lad of some foreign people, 'was travelling with a party of pedlars [presumably Arabs] and killed a snake which he came across. Although only a boy he was at once attacked by the Nuer of the Longaish section and beaten into unconsciousness.'[1]

[177] Some lineages, also of Dinka origin, have the spitting viper, *thatut*, for totem. I have been told that there are some Nuer who respect the snakes called *gur* and *dengcek* (the puff-adder), and it is possible that other snakes are totems. The small Cuor lineage of Dinka descent in Leek tribal area have the serpent *lou* for their totem. This huge, and presumably imaginary, creature is said to frequent streams and to have a comb like that of the crested crane and hair on its head which waggles from side to side as it swims in the water. Members of this lineage say that their ancestor was [173] sleeping in a hut with his wife and small child when one of these serpents came through the doorway and lay across them. The wife woke up and swooned at the sight of it. Later the man woke up, and finding his wife unconscious, but without seeing the serpent, promised God an ox for her recovery. Afterwards he saw the serpent and dedicated a cow to that serpent-spirit, and his descendants have respected the *lou* ever since. One of them, a man called Dol, told me that he once speared a *lou* by mistake, thinking that the movement he saw in the water was that of a fish, and was brought home prostrated. He recovered after sacrifice had been made.

be a brown beast calved of a brown beast. The snake is called *lualdit* on account of its brown (*lual*) colour.

[1] Op. cit., p. 167.

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776 613 773 I have been told that there is a small lineage, called Waloak, in eastern Gaajok country who respect tortoises. There is a curious story accounting for their adoption of this totem. A man of the lineage had his cow taken by a man of a neighbouring village and his repeated requests for it to be returned to him were unavailing. One day when he was going to the river he found a tortoise and wrapped it in a sheepskin. He continued on his way, and as he was passing the village of the people who had taken his cow, he took the opportunity of once more asking for it. They refused his request, but at that moment the tortoise poked its head against the skin pressing it outwards. The man bent over it and told it to be quiet as it would get its share that day. Again he asked for his cow and again it was refused, and once more the tortoise wriggled in the skin and was told to be quiet. The people of the village then became frightened because they thought that the man had some powerful medicine in the sheepskin and that, if they did not give his cow back to him, they might die with their children and cattle; so they surrendered the cow. The mention of medicine suggests a recent origin for the story.

776 613 Some lineages respect birds. The Jibegh of western Nuerland respect the ostrich and will not use its feathers as ornaments. Their spear-name is *mut wuot*, spear of the ostrich. It is said that ostriches will not eat the millet of members of this clan. [826] I once met a man with only three toes, stocky and undeveloped, to one of his feet. I was told that his maternal grandmother had the ostrich for totem, and that on the day of her daughter's marriage one of the bridegroom's people, as is the custom, threw a spear at her mud windscreen. She took the spear as her right and on examining it found that part of the shaft was bound with ostrich-skin. When her daughter bore a son he was deformed as I have described. The ostriches—or, rather, the spirit of ostrich—had stamped the likeness of an ostrich on the child.

Some small lineages of Dinka origin respect cattle egrets. One such lineage are the Rial of western Nuerland. I also met Lou [782] tribesmen who have the cattle egret for totem and I was present when some of them sacrificed a goat to the cattle egret-spirit on the bank of the Sobat river, not because anyone was sick, which is a common occasion of sacrifice to a totem-spirit, 'but just because they think of (*tim*) it'. This spirit is said to be a river-spirit

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for totem must not do so lest he cause the birds to devour the crop.

Plants are respected by some lineages. They may not cut them or burn their wood. The large Gaanwar clan respect the *nyuot*-tree (*Cordia Rothii*) and the *koat*, tamarind, tree. The ancestor of this clan fell from heaven holding a branch of the *nyuot*-tree in his hand or, some say, he descended from heaven by, or on to, a *nyuot* near which was a small tamarind.[1] Members of this clan call for aid on *kwoth nyota* or *kwoth kota*, the spirit of these trees. The *nyuot*, a branch of which is often erected in the homes of Gaanwar as a shrine to this spirit, is associated with rain on account of the humidity of its leaves even in the dry season. The verbal form of the word, *nyot*, means 'to drizzle'. Members of the clan may therefore be called on to bring rain in time of drought. This they do by placing a sprig of the tree in water, sacrificing an animal, and calling on the spirit of the clan, which is the spirit of the tree, for rain. It is, we may suppose, on account of their connexion with water that the clan have as additional totems the waterbuck and the fish *nyiwar*, *cur*, *lam*, *yiau*, and *gwejual* and can also speak of their spirit as '*kwoth puoara*', 'spirit of our waterbuck', '*kwoth lameda*', 'spirit of our *lam* fish', and so on. I have been told that women of this clan will not eat the meat of a cow which has died calving, but I do not know the reason for this abstention. The scattered Jwal clan share some of the Gaanwar totems. They seem at one time to have formed a single clan with the Gaanwar. The Jingop and Keunyang lineages of western Nuerland respect the *ngop* tree, the sycamore or wild fig (*Ficus Sycomorus*), and speak of '*kwoth ngoapna*', 'spirit of our fig-tree', to which they dedicate cows in their kraals, as is usual where there is a totemic relationship. The largest clan in Nuerland, the Gaatgankir of the Jikany tribes, respect gourds. Their ancestor was found in a gourd (*kir*). They will not cut or step over the stems of gourds or prepare them to serve as utensils, for they must not handle a gourd which still contains its pulp and seed. Nevertheless they use them as utensils for the same purposes as do other Nuer. The clan is of Dinka origin, though it now counts as a Nuer clan. Other plants respected by lineages, usually of Dinka descent,

[1] Some variants of the story of his appearance on earth are recorded in *The Nuer*, p. 230.

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are the *thep*-tree, papyrus, the *kwel*-tree (*Ficus platyphylla*), and *lel*, the dom palm.[1]

Some lineages respect rivers and streams. The ancestor of the Juak lineage of western Nuerland, of Dinka descent, is said to have come out of a big lagoon called *gwol*, so his descendants are known as Juak *jigwol* and the honorific titles of their sons and daughters are *gat* and *nya gwol*, son and daughter of (the lagoon) *gwol*. They respect all rivers and streams, and when a man of the lineage intends to cross a river he throws a bead into the water calling on his 'grandfather' (the river-spirit) to accept the offering and bring him in safety to the other side. A woman of the lineage will not take off her skirt when crossing a river as other women do, and unmarried girls, who are naked, place a few wisps of grass round their loins before entering the water. I was told that were a married woman to forget and step into the water naked, and were then to remember her obligation, she would return to the bank and pull off a bead or tassel from her skirt and throw it into the water, telling the river-spirit that she had not purposely offended it and asking it to accept her offering in atonement. The Gaatiek clan also respect rivers, and the Nile in particular because God brought their ancestor out of it. Being *jiyier*, river-people, they respect also the *gwot yier*, papyrus, and will not cut it. Their spear-names are *mut kier* and *mut yier*, spear of the Nile and spear of the river, and their honorific names are *gat* and *nya bar*, son and daughter of lagoon. They dedicate black cows to the Nile-spirit and they sometimes pour a libation of milk from these cows into rivers. When people are taking their families and cattle across rivers they milk one of the black cows dedicated to the river-spirit into a black snail-shell, which a man of the clan then turns upside down at the river's edge and keeps pressed into the mud while the people and herds pass over. This keeps the jaws of the crocodiles closed. In virtue of their relationship to rivers certain senior members of the lineage may also perform a rite for the safety of those

[1] Mr. H. C. Jackson, op. cit., p. 165, records that one of the clans of the Bul tribe respect the tree called in Arabic *duruba*, because their ancestor hid in this tree when fleeing from avengers. It is called *rir* in Nuer and is probably to be identified with *Pseudocedrela kotschyi*. Professor and Mrs. Seligman, op. cit., p. 213, say that the *hac* tree is respected by the Bul Nuer because their miracle-working ancestor used to sit under it, and by the Jidiet clan because their ancestor was killed with clubs made of its wood. They do not on this occasion tell us the sources of their statements.

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exchange it, or give it to one of their affines. When I asked whether this might not compromise the daughter or sister to whose husband it was given I was told: 'They have gone over to another lineage (*gol*), they are not your people any longer.' It is related—the theme of the story is widely distributed among the Nilotic peoples—that a man of the lineage went to bathe in a stream and placed his bead-strung girdle on the bank, where a *ma reng* cow came and looked at it while he was bathing. The man saw the cow near his girdle, but he did not see a kite swoop down and carry the girdle away in its claws; so when he discovered that it had disappeared he thought that the cow had eaten it, and he killed the animal and examined the contents of its stomachs in vain. Later someone found the girdle a long way off, where the kite had dropped it, and brought it to its owner, who was then sorry that he had killed the cow. Moreover, the owner of the cow uttered a conditional curse (*biit*) against him, saying that the spirit of cattle with *ma reng* markings would dog his footsteps and would kill him and his descendants were they ever again to drink the milk of cattle with *ma reng* markings, use their dung for fires, or clean their teeth with the ashes of their burnt dung.

The Gaagwong lineage of the Gaatgankiir clan respect cattle with *ma cuany* markings—an incongruous patch of colour in the middle of one of the common markings. The Jimem, or at any rate one of their lineages, the Jiruet, said to be of Dinka origin, also respect *ma cuany* cattle, and they are respected by all monorchids, to whom all cattle with this peculiarity are thought to be dangerous. This Jimem lineage also respect monorchids, both human or animal, and they have *mut tora*, spear of monorchid, for their spear-name.

The Jikul clan respect the hides of cattle. As far as I am aware, they sleep on them as do other Nuer, but it is said that they refrain from beating a hide to get the ashes of their dung fires off it, as other Nuer do, and shake it instead. The ancestor of this clan is believed to have fallen from the sky, wrapped in a fawn-coloured ox-skin, into a pool of water. Hence their spear-name is *mut kuli*, the spear of the hide, and their honorific titles are *gat* and *nya yan*, son and daughter of fawn-coloured, and *nya kuli*, daughter of hide. I have heard it said that a man of this clan will not eat heads of cattle and will not accept compensation in cattle for adultery with his wife. I was also told that should a man of the

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clan beat an ox-hide his next child might be born without teeth in the gums of the upper jaw as a cow is without upper incisors. A further observance said to obtain in the clan is that their women may not cross a marshy shallow without first kicking some water out of it. People say that the Jikul are *jikwoth*, God's people, in that they are an augury in war, for if a man on the side they are supporting in a fight should be the first to be wounded their party knows that it will be defeated and should retire, whereas if a man of the other side is the first to be wounded they know by this that they will be victorious and should press forward. When a girl of the clan is married a cow of her bridewealth goes to the hide-spirit, and if she is later divorced this cow remains with her parents as indemnity for the hides the people sat on during the marriage negotiations. Mr. B. A. Lewis tells me that when he suggested holding a dance in a village mostly occupied by a Jikul lineage in the Lak tribe he was asked to make a present to the chief man of the community in compensation for the beating of the tympanum of the drum.

The Jikoi clan respect rafters (*koi*) and rope used in the building of byres and huts. They use them for building but they will not use those of an old habitation for fuel. It is related that in ancient times men of this clan tried to build a byre which would reach to the clouds. Other people said that this could not be done because the clouds were far away, and there was much argument on the matter during the building. God in the sky heard the argument and was angered at the presumption of those who wanted to build a byre to reach the heavens, and he sent down lightning and destroyed the builders.

I have mentioned all Nuer totems of which I have certain knowledge and I now say a few words about totemistic relationships before discussing some of the chief features of Nuer totemism and its significance for an understanding of their conception of Spirit. In Nuerland one often finds that individuals respect classes of things not respected by other members of their lineages or even by their close kin. There are people, probably all or mostly of Dinka origin, who refrain from eating certain parts of beasts: entrails, heart, liver, kidneys, spleen, head, and hooves. In those few cases I have inquired into, the association was said to have come about through a misfortune connected with the parts abstained from. For example, people who abstain from eating hearts

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776 of descent. Other totems were added later. 'The spirits of their
613 sacrifices (to which they sacrifice) entered into the generations of descent (*kath*).' This might happen in various ways, some of which I have described. An animal or plant, or rather Spirit in and through an animal or plant, helps a man in trouble, and so forth.
776 The commonest aetiology is twin-birth of a man and a member
773 of a natural species. Twin-birth is so stock an explanation of
845 totemic affiliations among the Nuer that when asked why a certain lineage respect a certain species they often, if they do not know any story accounting for the association, say at once and without reflection that it must be because of a twin-birth of this kind. It is only when it would be totally unreasonable that a Nuer rejects this as a likely explanation. In discussing totemism with some Nuer on one occasion one of them told me that he had heard that there were people who respect fire. When I asked whether this meant that a man and fire had been born together my question was greeted with derision: 'How, now, could a woman carry fire in her womb?'

776 Strange though it may seem to us, Nuer claim that twin-births
845 of men and animals have taken place not only in ancient times but also in recent generations. They may take place even today and occasion no surprise. I had not been long in Nuerland when one morning my Nuer servant Nhial came in some excitement to tell me that a woman of his village, where we were staying, had given birth to a hippopotamus and a male child, both dead. It was too late to see what happened, but I was told that the hippopotamus had been placed in a nearby stream and the child, being a twin and therefore in Nuer eyes a sort of bird, had been placed in a tree. In answer to my questions, I was further informed that it was uncertain whether the family would on account of what had happened respect hippopotamuses in future, though had the child lived he and his descendants would certainly have done so. The reason given for this particular twin-birth was that the woman's husband had killed several hippopotamuses and they had revenged themselves on him by stamping their likeness on one of the twins (*ca gat cal e rau*). In this case, therefore, one is in doubt whether what was taken to the stream was regarded as a hippopotamus in the full sense or not, for animals can stamp their likenesses on a human foetus; but at least the incident shows us how the totemic mentality of the Nuer inclined them at once to

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789 curse is said to be feared because it may injure the cherished herds. It may also cause a man diarrhoea whenever he drinks milk. Much of the influence exercised by the Nuer prophets who were so prominent in recent times was due to the fear their curses inspired.

789 773 A *biit*, in a conditional form, is often cited by Nuer as a mythological explanation of some custom. Somebody in past times cursed certain persons if ever they or their descendants should do certain things. I give a few examples. A member of the aristocratic lineage of the Karlual section of the Leek tribe will not live in the country of the Lang tribe. The explanation is that once upon a time a Karlual aristocrat and a Lang aristocrat together speared a buffalo, which charged and knocked down the Lang man and began to worry him. He called out to the Karlual man to spear the animal again, but the Karlual man did not do so, fearing that he might injure his companion. Before Lang (tribes are personified in myths) died he cursed Karlual, saying that if ever a member of the dominant clan of Karlual settled in Lang country he would die. Another story is about the Riaagh lineage, who are a branch of the Keunyang lineage, the dominant lineage in the Karlual country referred to in the story I have just related. It concerns their relations with the Ngwol lineage of the same tribal section who are said to be descended from a man of this name who was a foundling adopted by Keunyang. Riaagh had a newborn child and the mother was so busy looking after it that she often let her fire out and rekindled it by borrowing a brand from the fire of Ngwol's wife. One day Ngwol fell sick with smallpox and sent word to Riaagh that his wife was not to come to his home again for fire as he was ill. Riaagh did not believe him and sent his wife again to borrow fire. A fight ensued and Ngwol killed Riaagh. Riaagh's mother then uttered a curse, saying that the descendants of Ngwol would suffer misfortune if ever they were to eat out of the same pot as the descendants of Riaagh or to sit near their cooking-pots. If today a Ngwol man sits near a Riaagh pot there will be a quarrel. The Keunyang lineage figures in another myth of this kind. If a man of this lineage crosses the Gazelle river to settle among the collateral lineages of Deng and Cuaagh, or a member of either of these two lineages crosses the river to settle among the Keunyang, the settler builds his byre without an entrance of the usual form. This custom is said to date from the time when the Deng and Cuaagh lineages first crossed the river to settle

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to the north of it, leaving the Keunyang in what had been their common home to the south of it. Quarrels ensued and Keunyang uttered a *biit* making it a condition of any future settlement. Yet another story relates how Jwal and Gaawar (clans, like tribes, are personified in myths) went fishing together. Jwal lacked a pot in which to cook his catch and he asked Gaawar to lend him his pot, but Gaawar refused, so Jwal had to do the best he could with a gourd plastered with mud. To mark this meanness he uttered a *biit* saying that if a member of either clan were to take shelter during rain under the same roof as a member of the other clan lightning would destroy them both. I have heard people shout to a member of one of these clans who had entered a hut for shelter from a storm to get out as there was a member of the other clan present. This story may be connected with the association of the Gaawar clan with sky and rain. There are a number of such stories relating to inter-clan relations which probably mirror actual or historical local and political interrelations which lie outside the present discussion.

A *biit* of a rather different kind is that relating to certain girls called *kuony*, who are said to be dangerous to their husbands. It is said that a girl of this name was affianced by her brothers to a man with some unpleasant complaint. She refused to marry him and was often beaten by her brothers on this score, because the man had many cattle. Eventually she gave way and married him, but then she refused to cohabit with him. Her husband eventually died of his complaint and the girl was left alone in his home, and lions and hyenas came by night and ate the cattle and beasts of the flock, as there was no man in the home to defend it. So she uttered a curse over her kinsmen, saying that in future daughters of their lineage would always bring death to their husbands. I have met *kuony* girls in western Nuerland, where it was pointed out to me that their husbands, as I could see for myself, had died young. However, this does not seem to prevent men from marrying them, and I was told that they are regarded as unusually attractive.

There are also many examples of a *biit* in Nuer just-so stories explaining how animals acquired their characteristics and habits. The giraffe has what looks like a hollow in the top of its head. When his mother died giraffe asked shrewmouse to lend him a hoe to dig a grave in the earth to bury her, but as shrewmouse

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538 in them because the animals are made to act like men after the
825 manner of fables. They are given human speech and feelings, live in villages and camps, and have kinship relations on the pattern of human relations; and as men stand in a certain relationship to God in real life, so the animals are placed in a similar relationship in the make-believe of the stories. Miss Huffman says of these stories that the Nuer 'implicitly believe' in them.[1] This was not my impression. It appeared to me that they realize that their folk-tales are just tales which are true only in the sense that they are, as we say, true to life, a dramatization of real situations and an accurate characterization of human and animal, and indeed also of spiritual, qualities. It does not, therefore, worry them that their folk-stories may not accord with, and may contradict, both evidences of the senses and those of tradition and myth, and also each other.

538 These stories reflect an attitude of mind about man's relation
825 to other creatures, and I mention them in this place, without, how-
773 ever, laying great stress on their significance, because they tell of an original age of innocence in which all creatures lived in amity in a common camp. Various stories, though separate tales and not related as parts of a coherent structure or dramatic plan, nevertheless taken together give us a picture of man at that time, or rather in that state, for the setting of myth and folk-lore lies outside time. He is entirely simple. He does not suffer from hunger, because what later became his stomach lives a life of its own in the bush where it feeds on small insects. He does not have to labour to live because, according to another story, which contradicts the last one, a single grain of millet soaked in water makes a sufficient meal. In this Nuer Eden there is no desire and mating, for the male and female organs are also not yet part of man and woman but live apart from them and separate from each other. As other, and once again contradictory, stories have it, man does not know how to beget or woman to bear. Man has no knowledge of fire and he does not know the spear. Then all changed. The new order is sometimes presented as arising from a quarrel in the camp started, it would seem, by fox persuading mongoose to throw a club into elephant's face. The animals separated and each went its own way and began to live as they now live and to kill each other. Stomach entered into man and he is now always hungry. Elephant taught

[1] Ibid., p. 88.

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him how to pound millet so that he now satisfies his hunger only by ceaseless labour. The sexual organs attached themselves to man and woman so that they are now constantly desirous of each other. Mouse taught man how to beget and woman how to bear. Dog brought fire to man. And we are told that while fox was plotting to sow dissension among the beasts he gave man the spear and taught him how to use it. It was then that man began to kill, and his first killing seems to have been that of the mother of cow and buffalo, or rather the mother of cattle, for at that time cows and buffaloes were the same. This led to a feud between men and cattle, buffaloes avenging their mother by attacking men in the bush and cows by causing men to quarrel and slay one another.

It may perhaps sharpen our focus on sacrifice to know not only that Nuer seldom kill wild animals but also that they can imagine a state in which man did not kill, that there might have been a beginning to killing as to coitus, to pounding grain, and to other things men do now. Viewed in relation to the dialectic of the stories, the killing of cattle is then seen not to be, as it were, derived from a state of nature in which men kill animals for food, as just one sort of killing among others, but as a product of a new dispensation in which cattle are allotted a sacrificial role and are set apart for this purpose. Other animals may, as a matter more or less of chance, and now and again, be killed, but it is the role and destiny of cattle to be slaughtered in sacrifice. Sacrificial slaughter thus stands at the very centre of the idea of killing, and sacrificial flesh at the very centre of the idea of feasting.

We may conclude, therefore, that the observations we have made earlier concerning the relationship of a man with his favourite ox, the ritual of initiation, &c., must be viewed in the light of the identification of men with cattle in sacrifices. A Nuer does not look upon his cattle as a stockbreeder or dairy farmer does, for in his case his relationship to his beasts is complicated, apart from their use in marriage, by their reservation for sacrifice. And it is not just that he must not kill cattle except in sacrifice because if he were to slaughter them for meat he would lower his resources for food, marriage, and religious purposes. It is not merely a negative injunction. It is not 'thou must not kill' but 'thou must sacrifice'. It is not that they must only kill for sacrifice but that they must sacrifice to kill.

We must not be led astray by this conclusion to suppose that in